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T W O

DISCOURSES

O N T H E

INJUSTICE and WICKEDNESS

O F

False Weights and Measures;

Preached at the Parish Church

O F

SHEFFIELD,

On Sunday, December 15th, 1754.

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By JOHN DICKINSON, M. A.

S H E F F I E L D :

Printed by FRANCIS LISTER, opposite the Cross Daggers,
in the Market-Place.

M, DCCCLV.

T W O

DISCOURSES

ON THE

INJUSTICE AND WICKEDNESS

OF

False Weights and Measures:



Preached at St. Andrew's Church

ON

SHEFFIELD.

On Sunday, December 18th, 1774.

By JOHN DICKINSON, M.A.

Printed by FRANCIS INNES, opposite the Old Burying-ground, in the Market-Place, Sheffield.

TO THE
Capital Burgeſſes,

A N D
Inhabitants of the Town of
Sheffield,

These Discourses

Published at their Request,

A R E
With the utmoſt Reſpect

I N S C R I B E D ;

By their moſt obedient Servant,

John Dickinson.

TO THE
Capital Burgesses,

AND
Inhabitants of the Town of
Sheffield

These Discourses



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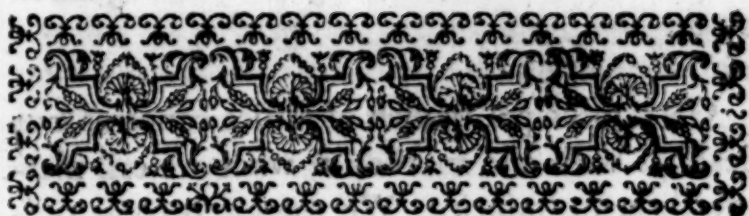
AT

With the utmost Respect

INSCRIBED

By their most obedient Servants,

John Dickinson.



T H E
INJUSTICE and WICKEDNESS
O F
False Weights and Measures.

PROV. XX. 10.

Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.



JUSTICE between man and man is that rule, by which we are to regulate our actions one towards another, in such a manner, as to give every one his due, and not to obtain from any what does not properly belong to us, or detain from any those things which properly belong to them. This duty

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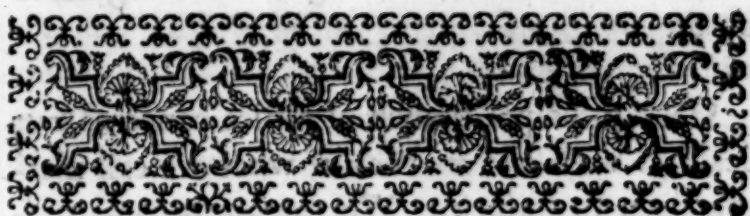
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is of a large extent, and a considerable part of our behaviour is, or ought to be regulated by it.

ONE principal branch of justice concerns our dealings with one another in what we call merchandize, or traffick. We cannot become possessed of the comforts, and conveniences of life without purchasing them of one another, that is, without instituting a method of exchange. And that method of exchange cannot be carried on for the mutual service, and emolument of mankind without observing justice, that is without a fair, and equal conduct. Here the rules are many. Men must be faithful in their contracts, and exact and punctual in their payments. They must not practice artifices to diminish when buyers, or augment, if sellers, the fixed and reasonable price; or any ways to blind the understanding, and mislead the judgment. They must not take advantage of the ignorance of unskilful persons, and sell corrupted wares for good, or buy what they know to be sound and perfect as if they were bad and faulty. They must not make their gain of the buyers or the sellers necessities, and on that account exact upon them, and buy their goods at a cheaper, or sell them goods at a dearer rate than they deserve. They must not change, and substitute worse for better when sold, or better for worse when

of false WEIGHTS and MEASURES. 7

when bought ; or diminish, or increase the quantity as will serve the turn. Lastly, they must not use false weights, or measures, and consequently any art or trick to make commodities weigh more or less, or measure otherwise than they do in their natural state.

ALL these are frauds, and doubtless there are more that might be mentioned, and, *as such*, are directly contrary to truth, and justice. At present I shall confine myself to that of falsifying weights and measures, which whether we regard the frequency of the practice, or the harm it does, or the natural baseness of it, or indeed the guilt, or punishment that attends it, deserves a serious consideration.

THE use of weights and measures hath been long considerable in the world, and the invention of them is very ancient. It was soon found out, that no one person could easily furnish himself with all the necessaries, and much less with all the conveniencies of life—that some men abounded with some things which they could spare, and wanted others with which some abounded—that an exchange of each would be very useful on both sides, as it would save time and trouble, and add to the number and variety of delights—that some kind of proportion must be observed in the exchange ac-

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according to the different size, and use, and scarcity of things — and that this proportion, or relative estimation, could only be adjusted truly by the assistance of weights and measures, which the things themselves easily suggested. Thus, in the infancy of commerce, he who had bread or corn to spare, and stood in need of wool or raiment, could by their help ascertain such a certain quantity of the one, as was equal in value to such a certain quantity of the other: and so in all things else. Indeed, as many inconveniences attended this method of exchange; as frequently a man wanted one thing which another could well part with, and yet could not in return accommodate him with what he stood in need of; as sometimes the exchange itself was cumbersome and unweildy; and as some could part with things, which others wanted, and had not an immediate occasion for other necessaries, which could not be deposited in safety, or would decay upon their hands; these defects were to be corrected: and so they were by affixing according to their weight or form an imaginary value to some scarce and curious metals, not otherwise so valuable as such, called by us, when stamped into a particular shape, money, and when in large abundance, wealth, riches, and such like names; which were easily portable, of a lasting nature, and fit to lie as a pledge to supply in
future

of false WEIGHTS *and* MEASURES. 9

future times whatever might be craved or called for of equal worth with what had been disposed of for them: to which, as a kind of standard or denomination of it's value, every thing by degrees became adapted according to it's quality and goodness, it's weight and measure.

IT was for the general convenience of mankind that weights and measures themselves (at first various and uncertain,) were in each civilized community brought to a fixed and regular determination, which we call THE STANDARD, that so, their properties being known, there might be a rule to try and examine them by, and, their qualities being generally allowed, they might be of general use, and prevent all dispute and difference. This method of acting was established by mutual consent and custom, or the Laws of each particular society, and it was undoubtedly a very laudable and advantageous institution.

THAT it is of much importance to employ care, and exactness in fitting weights and measures to such standards as consent and custom, or the laws have warranted, and to apply them faithfully in all bargains; that is, to have them true, and use them justly, is very plain. In the *Jewish Ordinances* God himself prescribes these terms concerning this matter. *Ye shall*
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do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have: I am the LORD your God. Lev. xix. 35, 36. MOSES recapitulating sundry laws declares, *Thou shalt not have in thy bag a stone, and a stone,* (whence it may be noted stones were anciently used for weights,) *or diverse weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house an ephah, and an ephah, or diverse measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee. Deut. xxv. 13, 14, 15.* The same upright conduct is effectually enjoined in the *Christian Dispensation*, and the like motives or reasons are assigned. Our SAVIOUR affirms that *with the same measure, that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* And an APOSTLE commands that *no one should go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter,* (oppress, or overreach the margin renders it, perhaps it would be more faithfully translated *make an unlawful gain of*) *because that the LORD is an avenger of all such.* This behaviour is also strictly consonant to reason: for it is acting agreeably to the truth of things, and our natural obligations, and must contribute to the ease and benefit

of false WEIGHTS and MEASURES. II

nefit of individuals, and likewise of communities. This is certain, all civilized societies have thought it worth their care to guard and protect this branch of justice, and discourage every violation of it.

BUT as conscience is the best security for the performance of what is right, and the avoiding what is wrong, since laws may be, and often are eluded with impunity, I shall apply myself to that, and, I hope, afford you such conviction as will not easily be forgotten.

THE falsifying weights and measures hath been too common in every age, and it is to be feared it is in this. The Words of SOLOMON are intended as a prohibition of this vice, and do as much as say, since *a stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah*, or in a more intelligible language, since *diverse weights and diverse measures are an abomination to the LORD*, take care how you presume to use them lest you incur his just displeasure, and suffer by it. Perhaps, it is not needless to observe that the words *diverse weights*, and *diverse measures* mean such as, to suit various purposes, are either too large or too small, and differ from a fair and legal standard; and include all kinds of instruments which are contrived, as some very easily may be, to seem exact, and yet not weigh or
measure

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measure justly; and likewise every deceitful use, or rather abuse of those that are fair and legal; as also every art or craft that diminishes or increases the weight, or bulk of things, as well as every species of adulteration — But in discoursing upon this useful subject I shall take an easy method, and shew you,

I. THE injurious and sordid nature of this vice.

II. THE reasons why it is offensive to Almighty GOD. And

III. THE great evils and punishments it does, or may object men to.

AFTERWARDS a general dissuasive, and serious admonition will not be thought unreasonable.

IT is my business, in the first place, to shew you the injurious and sordid nature of this vice.

HERE I shall lay down some plain and obvious maxims. Every Man hath a full and perfect right in what is his own, and cannot be dispossessed of it against his will without suffering an injury. To say otherwise is to maintain, that what is his, is another's property, or that what is his, is not his, or that he may be wronged and not wronged by the same act and deed; than which nothing can be a flatter contradiction.

tradiction. Every man in a matter of exchange hath a right to that quantity of goods or merchandise, which by it's weight, and measure, and other known qualities is equivalent to the price he pays for it: and on the other hand, every man hath a right to such a sum of money, as is equivalent to the quantity of things he parts with. To say otherwise is to maintain that he hath a right to more or less than is equivalent, which is absurd; for, besides that it is opposite to all our ideas of proportion, and the nature of relations, a right must be grounded somewhere, and cannot be deduced from nothing. Consequently, when the quantity delivered is not equivalent to the price that is paid for it; or the price is not equivalent to the quantity delivered, according to common and reasonable estimation, and the act is intentionally committed; an injury is done, the man is robbed. It means nothing to assert that the case is altered because of his consent: for that is not fact unless he was acquainted with, and consented to the imposition. I may add one maxim more. Every established weight, or measure, which is lessened or enlarged to sell or buy with, ceases to be such, and becomes another thing. To say otherwise is to maintain nothing less, than that a thing may be the same however varied in it's form, or different in it's proportions, or unlike itself; which no

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man in his sober senses can assent to. And therefore he, who thus estimates my property or his own upon exchange, and, to my sensible disadvantage, accounts with me for it as if fairly estimated, does me a real injury, he wrongs me. All this proves in the strictest reasoning that this vice is really injurious.

Now, let us proceed still further, and discover if we can with some exactness the nature of this injurious treatment in it's full extent: for we shall judge much amiss of the quality of an action, or the heinousness of a crime, if we do not consider the aggravating circumstances that accompany it, nor attend to the evil effects and consequences it leads to.

AND here we may observe, that ingratitude is a mighty aggravation of an injury. He that does a wrong to one, from whom he hath received unkindness and incivilities, hath something, tho' not sufficient, to plead for an excuse. But he that wrongs a neighbour, a friend, a person who does him obliging offices, must be a monster of injustice. Now, this is the very case with those, who falsify their weights and measures. As the business of the world is managed, men live and maintain their families by their callings, that is, by the profits that accrue from the disposal of their wares. Those,
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who lay out a share of their substance with them, contribute to their livelihood: and therefore the injury is done to them, who furnish their support and maintenance, and the comforts of their lives; and that too in the very act and instance of their kindness, than which nothing can be more ungrateful.

DISSIMULATION is another, and no small addition to an injury. The man, who openly attempts to wrong you, affords you an opportunity sometimes to avoid, and sometimes to redress the wrong, at least he gives you sufficient warning always for the future to beware of him. He that demands your purse upon the road shews himself, and exposes to your view your enemy, whom, if you can grapple with and overcome, you may escape, or you may punish. It is true, he may do you greater harm, but the manner in which he does it supposing he offers no violence to your person is, if the expression may be allowed me, more frank and honest, for he tells you he is a rogue. Now, when the injury is concealed every advantage is precluded of defence and recompence; and therefore it becomes the worse, as you are liable to another, and another, and must discover the impostor as you can. Thus it fares with those, who deal in deceitful weights and measures. While they

wear the mask of honesty, and continue unsuspected they cheat you more effectually, because you are not upon your guard, because you repose your confidence in them, and thereby add to the injury they do you a breach of trust, in other words, the injury is the greater.

CRUELTY is another grievous aggravation of an injury. When any circumstances of that kind attend it, it grows more afflicting and oppressive : This no one can deny. Now, false weights and measures are particularly hurtful to the poor. Their labour is sometimes leanly recompenced ; sometimes their families are large ; and they are forced to live from hand to mouth, and are compelled by hard necessity to purchase the necessaries of life in the smaller quantities. And therefore those who deal in them, if by fraud they detain a part, may perhaps sometimes starve whole families of harmless children, sometimes expose their helpless parents, who work for their subsistence and with difficulty earn it, to weakness, wants, infirmities, and diseases. And, since such are objects of our charity, and have a just claim to tender and compassionate usage, is not this most barbarously injurious?

THESE are terrible aggravations, and yet I may further add, that the injury is somewhat heightened, as it is done by men under an appearance

pearance and pretence of justice, sometimes with the emblems of it in their hands; and likewise in proportion to the numbers that are affected by it; and also, as it is not always easy to be discovered, and if discovered is not always easy to be redressed. These truths are very visible: for the use of weights and measures is an appeal to justice; and if they are falsified it is done with a view to gain, which cannot ordinarily be compassed in any great degree without defrauding many: The rich will not spare the trouble, and the poor cannot spare the time to make discoveries to the full; and a redress is attended with difficulties and expence.

THUS the injurious nature of this vice hath been plainly shewn to you, and in a manner that at the same time evidences that it is mean and sordid. For what can be more so than to convert to my use, without his leave, without his knowledge, another's substance, in which I have no property—and that, in spite of gratitude, when in that very instant he is conferring on me a particular favour——and that, in contempt of all good faith, and for the very reason because he puts a special trust in me, and believes I will not defraud him—and that, as it may sometimes happen, and doubtless often does, at the expence of him, or his family suffering hardships and distress, by being

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ing so far deprived of those refreshments and accomodations, which a laborious and indigent life requires? Is this acting like a man, or like a christian? Where is the dignity of human nature? Where is the excellence of faith or knowledge? Where is reason, or religion? Shew me them, if you can, in such a conduct; a conduct do I call it? In such a thievish disposition, which will steal by grains rather than not steal at all; and that, without distinction from rich or poor, from friend or foe; and if you cannot shew them, then honestly confess it is mean and fordid.

IF it be needful to subjoin any thing more to make this plainer, I may just inform you, that as this behaviour is extremely base and scandalous, so is the principle from whence it flows; which is nothing but a vicious selfishness, or what is generally called covetousness, or an unjustifiable and filthy love of lucre. And in this case it is so bad a principle, that, you may depend upon it, they that are actuated by it, in the manner before described, would do wrong in any other way, could they do it with the same degree of ease and safety. The principle is strong: You must have observed it to have exerted it's force, even in this way, when there was no temptation from want or poverty; and then, what should restrain it in any other, where

where the apparent danger is as little? I shall barely add, that no good thing can be expected from those who are influenced by it. How should they be just, or faithful, who are daily guilty of treachery and injustice? How should they shew mercy, and be charitable to the poor, to whom they will not give their due? What acceptable worship can they pay to GOD? *If they love not their brother whom they have seen*, that is, behave to him as such, *how should they love GOD whom they have not seen?* And if any good is done, or charity bestowed by them, so long as they continue vicious in this respect; be assured, it is by way of commutation, to make a truce with GOD and conscience for a while, that they may sin on with greater peace of mind. So mean and sordid, so base and scandalous is **this vice**, that it degrades, at least in our opinion, every action the best and greatest.

I HAVE been more careful in considering the bad nature of this vice (and what I have said is applicable to it in all the shapes I mentioned, let it consist in which it will) on purpose, that no man should think the offence, or crime is small, because the gain is sometimes trifling. I shall conclude this important head with a remarkably fine reflection of the wise son of SIRACH, the former part of which is extremely applicable to
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what I have already observed, and the latter will be more explained hereafter.

Many have sinned for a small matter: and he that seeketh for abundance will turn his eyes away, that is, from righteousness, truth, and justice. As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones: so doth sin stick close between buying and selling. Unless a man hold himself diligently in the fear of the LORD, his house shall soon be overthrown.



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INJUSTICE and WICKEDNESS
O F
False Weights and Measures.
DISCOURSE *the* SECOND.

HAVING described the injurious and
fordid nature of this vice, I proceed, in
the second place, to shew you the reasons why
it is offensive to Almighty God.

I BELIEVE there are few persons, who have
attentively considered all that hath been ad-
vanced, but who would from thence alone, ex-
clusive of every other argument or motive, na-
turally conclude that such a conduct must be

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highly displeasing to that good Being, which gave us life, and power, and sense, and reason; and governs now, and will finally judge the world. But as the injurious, and sordid nature of this vice hath been set before you in several different views; it cannot be amiss to place the guilt, or criminal nature of it in a variety of lights. The usefulness of this procedure is visible enough. All men are not equally affected by the same kind of reasoning. There is a difference in our minds; education, habits, passions, pursuits make it wider still: so that it is no rarity to find that an argument, which takes with some, is overlooked by others. And therefore, when a truth of great importance is to be impressed, nothing should be omitted that will give it force, and make it universally convincing. Should it be observed by any that the duty, which lies before us, is very plain, and therefore little needs to be insisted on; I fear, the practice of mankind will teach them otherwise, or teach them this, that, plain as it may be, the time, or labour will be well employed, that brings men to conform their actions to it. — Which way soever we turn our eyes, this vice can appear no other, than *an abomination to the LORD*.

THE point is not difficult to be cleared. GOD is a being of consummate justice. Reason
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(if we will consult it), tells this truth : for if justice is an attribute of excellence, it must be included in the notion of perfection ; and perfection only, and emphatically belongs to him. If he is not just, it must be for want of knowledge, or for want of power, or for want of will to do what he knows and is able to perform. No other cause can be assigned ; but none of these defects is to be ascribed to him, and therefore he is just. The same doctrine Scripture teacheth every where. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out, that is, his essence, or absolute perfection, yet he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice. The LORD your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He loveth righteousness, and executeth judgment. He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works ; and justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.* Now, if this be fact, certainly the case is plain, that every deviation from truth and justice is odious in his sight, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity ; in other words, this vice of falsifying weights and measures is offensive to Almighty God. Here the conclusion holds, but yet another observation may be made.

GOD hath exprefly commanded, in the revelation which he hath vouchsafed to make of his will to men, that they fhould be juft and true in all their dealings with one another; and particularly that they fhould avoid all deceit in weights and meafures. This we have feen already, both with refpect to the *Jewifh* Difpenfation, and the *Chriftian*; and it is one of thofe injunctions, which are of a moral nature, and perpetually binding. The only queftion is, what right hath he to our obedience? *Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieft againft God? Shall the thing formed fay thus to him that formed it?* The abfurdity is too glaring. If then his commands are juftly founded, and it be fit and right that men fhould act conformably thereto; if he hath therein difcovered the greateft kindnefs, and good will to men; if they are all contrived for their advantage as well as his honour: this vice, being a direct violation of them, muft neceffarily offend him.

THE matter may be carried ftill further. God hath endued mankind with reason for a guide in all their actions. It is a high diftinction, and the glory of their nature; and therefore, as he defires the perfection of his creatures, he muft defire that they fhould behave agreeably to it's dictates; and when they follow the directions of fuch a fage advifer, they perform the

the part allotted them, and merit his approbation. He hath a right to expect from them that they should regulate their behaviour by it, and cause enough to be displeased when they omit to do so. Now this species of injustice is irrational and unbecoming, dishonourable and degrading, and consequently must on this score also, supposing no command had intervened, be abominable and offensive in the sight of GOD.

IT may be added yet, that exactness in weights and measures is pointed out, and suggested strongly to us by the nature of things themselves. By the contrivance and establishment of Providence, the proportion of things, and their various mutual relations are in many respects necessary to be determined, and yet can only be determined by this rule; which is an intimation, since Providence does nothing without design, that this rule is to be scrupulously observed. In this sense therefore it may be said, that *God hath ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight*; and it may be affirmed on this account, as well as on that of the foregoing considerations, that *a just weight and balance are the LORD's*, and that *all the weights of the bag are his work*. And if his intentions are wise and reasonable, which cannot be disputed, the consequence must be that
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an abuse or perversion of them must undoubtedly displease him.

I SHALL subjoin but one thing more. The nature of mankind is such, and their wants so very many, that trade and commerce, or an exchange of the produce of the ground, as it is manufactured by art and industry, are necessary for their subsistence, at least for the comforts of their lives. Now a fraudulent and delusive method of exchange must abate those satisfactions, and in a manner destroy that peace, and harmony that subsists among them. For all have a right to what is theirs, and cannot be deprived of it without an injury; and none approve of being wronged, but generally resent it. And as GOD wills, and desires the happiness of all, and hath done his part for the furtherance and procurement of it; such a conduct, as in any degree defeats that good, and gracious, and important end, must certainly be provoking to him.

THESE are the reasons, why *diverse weights, and diverse measures are an abomination to the LORD*. And, as they are so opposite to his attribute of justice; as they are such a manifest violation of his express commands; as they are so contrary to the reason of our own minds; as they interfere so much with the purposes to be answered

answered by the nature of things themselves, and absolutely disturb the peace, and happiness of mankind, how should they but be horribly offensive? Unless you can suppose him heedless, and unconcerned at what his creatures do, and careless about right and wrong: unless you can suppose him to be such a God, *that either he is talking, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* A presumptuous, and terrible imagination! Not fit to be entertained by mortal man. Entertain it at your peril. — But if you dare not, then let me address you in the language of the Prophet: *Why are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure, the measure of leanness, which is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? — He that maketh this haste to be rich shall not be innocent. The mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

THUS you have seen the guilt, or criminal nature of this vice, and that it must be offensive to Almighty God. I go on to shew you, in the third place, the great evils and punishments which it does, or may expose men to.

WE should have a fine world indeed, if the wickedness of the wicked were always to be prosperous.

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prosperous. But, as unequally as things are dispensed here, enough appears to satisfy us that virtue and pleasure, and vice and pain are generally connected. And, altho' some exceptions happen, we have abundant reason to conclude that a time will come, when the stream will turn, and no instance will remain of suffering goodness, or successful villainy. It is too common with mankind, such is their blindness or stupidity, either not to perceive at all, or not to regard sufficiently the real tendency of their actions. Were it otherwise, and did they constantly look forward with deliberate care and caution, vice would be less prevailing: For self-love is natural, and strong, and no one of the least sense or prudent fore-sight, would indulge himself in any pleasure, or in any profit, that would cost him twice the pain, and twice the loss or more. All therefore that reason, all that religion asks of man, is to consult his safety, and promote his happiness in the greatest, truest, best, and wisest manner.

INDEED, in the case before us, men are not vicious merely for the sake of the vice itself without any other end in view. They do propose to themselves some weak, and foolish advantages. If they abound in wealth, they shall be less in fear of want; this pleads with some. If they abound in wealth, they shall be less in danger

danger of contempt ; this prevails with others. If they abound in wealth, they can then abound in pleasures ; this is a taking maxim. If they abound in wealth, they will then be armed with power ; this is a strong inducement. And, if they abound in wealth, tho' that wealth is more than is sufficient, and of course useless for every earthly purpose, yet they have the joy to think, that, when they come to die, they can bequeath it to their children, or give it to whom they please ; that is, they can leave it all behind them : A mighty consolation truly ! and yet, this pleases many. These are generally the motives that make men covet it, and for these paltry purposes they sometimes scrape together, in the dirtiest manner, a little substance. I have called the advantages proposed but weak, and foolish ; because they really are so, as they are often disappointed ; because they really are so, upon comparison of what is lost by getting them in so base a manner. For, suppose the advantages are gained, at the same time weigh but against them the opposite inconveniences, and you will find, in the words of the son of SIRACH, *there is a sinner that hath good success in evil things, and yet there is a gain that turneth to loss* ; or, in those of the wise PROVERBIALIST, *better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right* ; or, in the language of the PSALMIST, *a little,*

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that the righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.

ALL this may be easily demonstrated. No man can do an act of injustice to another, and defraud him, but he must suffer in his peace of mind. This is plain, because our notions of right and wrong are fixed and unalterable, and the decisions of conscience honest and impartial. And what a life must he lead, let his gains be as considerable as they will, and his outward circumstances ever so flourishing and prosperous, who hath something constantly fretting and teasing him within, that turns all his pleasures sour, and in his thinking moments, or when he should lie quiet on his bed fills his soul with horrors, and in a little sickness, or at the hour of death distracts him? His ill-gotten goods, and all the satisfactions they can yield him, were there nothing else, are dearly paid for, if they must be bought with remorse, and the anguish of a wounded conscience. But there is something more.

No man can do an act of injustice to another, and defraud him, but if he chances to be discovered, he must suffer for it in his reputation. This is an obvious consequence; because ill behaviour, when it is manifest and notorious, unavoidably tarnishes a character. The disadvantage

tage is not difficult to be estimated. A good name is one of our most valuable possessions. The Wise Man thinks, *it is rather to be chosen than great riches*. Every one may see, that it gains men respect, and confidence, and the kindest offices; and that, on the other hand, an evil reputation exposes them to censure, and dislike, and hatred. And it is easy to discover, if they will seriously reflect upon it, how much it goes against the grain, as self-love is so strong a passion, to bear contempt, and the just abhorrence of mankind. Therefore he, who parts with his reputation for a little trash, makes a simple—makes a dreadful bargain. But what is more,

No man can do an act of injustice to another, and defraud him, but if he happens to be detected, he must undergo the irksomeness of shame. This follows from the natural baseness of the action, which no colours can disguise, or eloquence excuse or palliate. Every man would willingly entertain a good opinion of himself; and yet, whether he can do so or no, every man, that is not quite abandoned, hath a strong desire that others should think well of him. But when the blackness of his heart is seen, and he knows how he is thought of, and how justly he deserves it, as a fondness for himself with all his meanness cannot be extinguished, it is impossible to conceive the uneasiness of his sensations, and

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inexpressible distress. This mortification only, upon a reasonable computation, exceeds a deal of profit. But this is not the worst.

No man can do an act of injustice to another, and defraud him, but, whether he is, or is not discovered, if he does not make him restitution, and by sincere repentance restore himself to favour, he must pay the price of it in another world. How solemn, and awakening is that declaration, which was sent by a messenger from heaven! *The time is at hand: he that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be:* which words import that men must be wicked at their peril. And indeed, if this present life is a state of trial and probation; if our future happiness, or misery depends upon our behaviour here; if God will render to every man according to his deeds, what glimpse of hope can such a sinner entertain that he shall stand acquitted, and escape destruction *in the day of his fierce wrath*, when *he maketh a terrible inquisition*, when *he putteth on the garments of vengeance*? This crime if unrepented of, will then be severely recompenced; and *it is a fearful thing to fall into the*
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the hands of the Living God: for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

By this time it is visible enough that the advantages, which are gained by this *bad* vice, are far exceeded by the evils and inconveniencies that are incurred, and the dangers that are risked on it's account. And yet it may be further affirmed, that the advantages themselves are but precarious; for in some cases it plainly leads to want, and beggary, as those who make a Ship-wreck of their consciences, and are noted for dishonesty, meet sometimes but with small encouragement in their callings, and get a poor subsistence, because no one cares to trust them. In this sense it is said by SOLOMON, *he that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.* And we may observe likewise that it is very probable, that Providence itself does frequently interpose to defeat their designs, and render them unsuccessful in the world. Such an event did happen, when God had a controversy with his people for this very kind of wickedness, the using *measures that were scanty, and weights that were deceitful.* The temporal judgments are thus described. *Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate*

*folate because of thy sins. Thou shalt eat but not be satisfied, and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee, and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver: And that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap: thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oyl; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine. And it is not unlikely, since his ways are equal, that he does still visit the like transgressors, and disappoint their aims, and make them in some way feel the severity of his chastisement. It may be noted also that ill-gotten substance frequently does not thrive, but vanishes unaccountably in conformity to those ancient observations, *treasures of wickedness profit nothing: wealth gotten by vanity, that is, injustice, shall be diminished: and an inheritance may be gotten hastily in the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.**

WHAT hath been said upon this subject explains the truth and justness of that beautiful remark, *bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel*: that is, the pain that follows is greater, and more lasting than the pleasure.

SINCE these are the great evils and punishments, which this vice does, or may expose men to;

to; a general diffuasive cannot be thought unreasonable.

You have seen the injurious nature of this despicable vice of falsifying weights and measures; and that it is a deprivation of another's right, and a detainment of another's property heightened by ingratitude, dissimulation, or breach of trust, and not seldom by cruelty itself. You have seen the sordid nature of this vice, how bad a principle it leans on, how much it is beneath a man, how it disqualifies him for any thing *praise-worthy, or of good report*, and throws a suspicion on his brightest actions. You have seen the criminal nature, or offensiveness of this vice to Almighty God, as it thwarts and contradicts his natural justice, his express commands, the reason of our minds, the design of things, and the common happiness of mankind. You have seen the miseries it renders men obnoxious to, by hurting their ease and quiet, undoing their reputation, covering them with shame, and *confusion of face*, and, after this life is ended, *by treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*, and devoting them to ruin. And you have likewise seen, in some respects, the unprofitableness of this selfish vice, as in certain cases it reduces men to want, pulls down temporal judgments on their heads, or entails a secret curse upon their substance, that makes it wither and decline. And
now,

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now, if you have any generosity in your temper, if you profess the least humanity towards your brethren, if you entertain compassion for the poor, who suffer by it most, if you regard the dignity of your nature, if you fear the God that made you, if you love and esteem yourselves, and desire your present interest and safety, and your everlasting welfare, be not guilty of this injustice, do not use deceit. I need not press any thing but your own advantage : Sell not the pleasure of your lives ; sell not your sweet peace of mind, your self-approving thoughts, which mend the best, and smooth the ruggedest condition ; barter not away esteem and reputation ; sell not heaven for gold. Indeed, the strongest temptations to this vice, are not of consequence enough to influence your minds. Considering the shortness of our stay on earth and what must be hereafter, what is the severity of pinching want ? What is the disgrace, or the contempt of poverty ? A little patience will teach men to endure them. Considering the shortness of our stay on earth, and what must be hereafter, what are fleeting pleasures ? What are dreams of Grandeur ? What is the mockery of power ? What is the pride of life ? A little fortitude will teach men to despise them. In a word, keep your substantial interest in view, and *follow after the things, that make for your eternal peace.*

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To subjoin a short, but serious admonition — Avoid not only this, but every kind of fraud, every kind of dishonesty. Be true and faithful both in word and deed, and *provide things honest in the sight of all men* — If any have done amiss — have done that which so evidently appears to be an offence against the reason of their own minds, an injury to their neighbours, *an abomination to the LORD*; let them repent and amend their lives, and their *sin and wickedness will be no more remembered* — But then let them take notice, that no repentance can be sincere, or amendment perfect without a restitution. For, how can he be sorry for his sin, and wish it had never been committed, who still enjoys *the wages of his unrighteousness*? And how is his disposition changed, who still holds fast with a griping hand what he unjustly got? Can restitution be a shame? It may be performed with secrecy: But surely it is a glory to confess a fault, and make a reparation — Can restitution be a difficulty? If the parties wronged are unknown, or are not to be come at, the poor are their receivers, and *the poor ye have always with you*. If the value is uncertain, be sure to give enough; if your circumstances are narrow, you are not bound to impossibilities, part with what you can — In fine, as it will make us come off more than conquerors, even after a defeat; as it will be a means to guard us from

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every future temptation, if we never fell; let not the things of this world too much engross our love, and blind our understandings, and betray our judgments; but *let us so use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.*

I HAVE one thing more to offer—Let it be remembered that all, that hath been laid before you, is only a faithful representation of *the word of God*; a just and honest explanation of a positive declaration in your *Bible*, written by the hand of God (and who dare blot it out? Who will venture to gainsay it? Who can disannul it?) that *diverse weights and diverse measures, both of them alike, are an abomination to him*: A declaration, which you may know at present, and must know hereafter concerns you nearly, if your happiness or misery, if the salvation of your souls concerns you. Judge then — Is it not a kindness, is it not a duty to remind you of it? And is it not an honour, is it not your safety, will it not be for your everlasting happiness to observe it? This branch of justice is part of your religion, whether you think it so, or no; and *wo to them that preach the Gospel*, if through servile fear or fordid flattery they neglect to teach it, and *wo to him by whom the offence cometh*, that hears and disregards it —

I can truly tell you, that not one word of all that hath been said is personally directed against any one man living. This is not the Place to utter spite in, or load with defamation: But this is the place from whence vice should be reformed, and virtue cherished. Otherwise, what reformation can be made? What useful end can be accomplished? The truth is, no particular reproaches are designed, or invectives levelled: But if any there should be, I say, if any there should be amongst those, that have heard me pass this just, this necessary censure, who, being self-accused, can apply it to themselves: They have free leave to do so, provided it be done for the purposes of amendment; for that will be to me a pleasure, and to them an unspeakable advantage.

I SHALL conclude all with the excellent reflections, and advice of a good APOSTLE, which are very applicable to the main purport of what hath been delivered.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. But they that will be rich, fall into a temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish, and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction, and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all

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all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows—But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: Words exceedingly expressive, and implying the strictest justice, and fairest equity in your dealings; a constant obedience, in all sincerity and uprightness, to the laws and commands of God; a firm assurance that his promises, and threatnings will certainly be fulfilled; an universal charity, or benevolence to mankind; an absolute contentment with the appointment of Providence, and your circumstances, and condition; and a mild, impartial, unselfish, inoffensive conduct— IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE THINK ON THESE THINGS.

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